MAPPING THE PENOBSCOOT EXPEDITION

Paige Lilly

The “Curator’s Corner” is elevated to the front page of this issue to highlight two new acquisitions to the CHS collections. Jack Macdonald, in his President’s Letter on page 3, describes the circumstances of acquiring two Revolutionary War manuscript maps in support of the Society’s research files and exhibits. The Penobscot Marine Museum in Searsport acquired related papers for their archives, and CHS looks forward to working with them to share the materials with visitors and scholars. Thanks to Sally Foote for her research assistance in preparing this article.

In mid-June 1779, British Brigadier General Francis Melean and Captain Henry Mowat landed at Majabigwaduce on Penobscot Bay in the Eastern District of Massachusetts with nearly 700 troops and at least three armed sloops to establish a post for the protection of American colonists loyal to the crown. The news reached Boston by letter on June 23rd. The Massachusetts General Court voted within days to organize an expedition to attack the British troops before they could entrench their position on the peninsula that would become the town of Castine less than twenty years later. Continental Navy officers, Marines, local militia, Army artillery units and privateers began gathering and planning their approach.

How would American forces know where to land the troops and storm the fort? Who knew the lay of the land?

Fortunately, Captain Joseph Chadwick, artillery officer, engineer and experienced surveyor, was at hand in the Massachusetts militia in or near Boston. In 1764, Chadwick created a survey of the Penobscot River in the District of Maine and explored the feasibility of creating a road from Fort Pownal, built near the entrance to the Penobscot River in 1759, to Quebec. He also completed a number of surveys of the Waldo Patent and Mount Desert Island beginning

(continued on page 6)
The Castine Historical Society welcomes the following new members

Peter and Maggie Begley
Jody and Arthur Blake
Peg Brandon
James Dillon
Mark and Susan Fenton
Louise Giugliano and Jean diSabatino
Barbara Simon
Dennis Spurling

Thanks and recognition are extended to those who have recently added to our collections

Adams School
The Ark Animal Shelter
Paul Barnes
Marian Bicks
Fran Bos
Castine Arts Association
Cumberland Historical Society
David Hatch
Nancy Helmers
Daniel Murphy
Wendy Santilli
Charles Shay
Charlotte and Harry Trewoory
Carolyn Williams
Charlene Wiseman

The Castine Historical Society gratefully acknowledges contributions received

In Honor of
Carol and Brian Barnard
Robert C. Dick
Willard Emery, Jr.
Sara F. Foote
Christopher Glass
Nancy R. Mundth
Robert B. Rettig
Bill Woodman

and

In Memory of
Dr. Diana Bogdonoff
Robert Daly
Henry E. Erhard
Harold Hatch
John A. Steppacher
Annesley Swicker
Alexander C. Whitridge

Editors’ Note: It has been our pleasure to edit the last 18 issues of the Castine Visitor. Over the past six years, we have learned much and enjoyed working with the staff and volunteers of the CHS. Please join us in welcoming the new editor, Wendy Knickerbocker and find out more about her on page 10 of this issue.

Visit the CHS on line at www.castinehistoricalsociety.org

If you are a current Facebook user, please “like” us at https://www.facebook.com/CastineHistoricalSociety
PRESIDENT’S LETTER

This last year has been an exciting one at the Castine Historical Society (CHS). It has been marked by building, acquisitions and publications. The CHS is reaching out to our community to provide information, exhibits and educational events to highlight the fascinating history of Castine.

Anyone passing by the Castine Town Common this summer would have seen that the house next to the Abbott School (CHS) was moved off its foundation and obviously was undergoing much renovation work. This building is the Samuel Grindle House originally built c1850. The Grindle House was acquired by CHS in 2008 and is being restored to its original c1850 appearance. Along with being an excellent example of a mid-19th century home, the Grindle property will also provide office space for our curator and part time administrator, a research library and a reading room. Also, of great importance, a state of the art historical preservation vault and archival storage facility will be built into the Grindle House. We are very fortunate, as a local Maine historical society, to be able to build this secure, climate-controlled addition. Its presence will allow the CHS to confidently pursue enhancing its collection with high value original documents and artifacts.

The Grindle House went back on its foundation in mid-September and its renovation will be completed in the early spring of 2014. With the ability to safely preserve and display important historical documents being almost at hand, CHS was presented with the opportunity to obtain important original documents critical to understanding the events commemorated by the only CHS permanent exhibit which is on the 1779 Penobscot Expedition. Original papers and maps belonging to Commodore Dudley Saltonstall commander of the Penobscot Expedition became available at auction in mid-August. The CHS, with the support of generous donors and use of funds from the Betty Duff Endowment, was able to obtain two very important maps from 1779 for our permanent collection. These maps markedly enhance the Penobscot expedition exhibit by their high quality and beauty. They are of great value to historians studying the Penobscot Expedition. See the article on page 1 by our curator.

Finally as the summer came to a close, it was clear that this year’s exhibit on 400 years of religion in the Castine region had been a very successful and popular attraction. The exhibit “Missions and Meeting Houses, Chapels and Churches: Four Centuries of Faith in Castine, Maine” grew out of the book of the same title written by CHS Board member Lynn Parsons. The book made an attractive complement to the exhibit and was also a popular item in the gift shop. I strongly recommend to anyone who has not read Lynn’s book that they purchase it (you can even get it on Amazon) and enjoy it. The CHS is deeply grateful to Lynn who along with Curator Paige Lilly, did all the research and wrote book totally as a donation to CHS. Lynn would accept no honorarium or royalties.

I would be remiss if I did not inform readers that this is my first President’s Letter, as I just became CHS President in August. I follow Marcia Mason who was a highly successful and universally admired and respected CHS President. Marcia is a very tough act to follow. I will try my best but I'll be satisfied if I am half as effective as Marcia was.

John S. Macdonald MD
THE SETTLEMENT QUESTION: THREE PERSPECTIVES

Lynn Parsons

Last July several dozen Castine residents turned up at Emerson Town Hall for a ninety-minute session discussing the town’s origins and the “settlement” question posed by the sign at the six-mile corner announcing that the town had been “settled” in 1613. The controversy had already attracted the attention of a Boston television station that sent a crew to interview several of us on this and other questions. The turnout in July was thus greater than that for some town meetings and a lot more fun.

The success of the meeting was in large part due to the leadership of the moderator, J. R. Phillips, recently retired after twenty years as the Executive Director of the Maine State Museum. He showed flashes of humor, offered occasional insights of his own, and kept the discussion on track. It is unlikely that anyone’s mind was changed, but that was not the point of the meeting. No votes were taken, and the sign, however dubious it might be, will probably remain.

To review: the notion that the town was settled in 1613 was first put forth a little more than a century ago by Charles Noyes, the son of Samuel Noyes, a prominent Castine shipbuilder. Mr. Noyes, who also inspired the creation of Castine’s “historical signs,” based his contention on two bits of evidence: first, the observation of Captain John Smith, who noted the presence of a French trading post in the area in 1614, and second, the contention of Nicolas Denys, a Frenchman living in Nova Scotia, that a fort had been built here at about that time. Neither Smith nor Denys ever set foot in the area.

According to Louise Wheeler Bartlett, Charles Noyes was persuaded that Castine was the site of the oldest non-native settlement in New England, older than Plymouth in Massachusetts, and he hoped for tercentenary, or 300-year observance, in Castine in 1913. There is no evidence that it ever took place. Undeterred, Noyes incorporated his idea in his “historical sign” near the old Fort Pentagoet (see above). In 1916 he read a paper before a Maine Historical Society meeting in Castine, which gave his views in greater detail.¹ Noyes died in 1921, but his signs live on.

How seriously was Noyes taken in his lifetime? Louise Wheeler Bartlett, writing a year after Noyes’ death, gave him full credit for the signs, but then noted that her father, Dr. George Wheeler, had nothing to do with them.² Dr. Alaric Faulkner, co-author of The French at Pentagoet in 1987, was less subtle, describing Noyes as “a shoe salesman and amateur historian.” As far as Faulkner was concerned, there was little or no evidence of any fort in the area before 1635. The sign at the fort, Faulkner thought, was “rife with errors, greatly exaggerating the fort’s duration and its political and economic significance.”³

Which brings us back to the “settlement” question. There are several definitions of the term, but most dictionaries define “settle” and “settlement” (CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)
in terms of some attempt at permanence, as “to place as to stay,” or “to establish or secure permanently.”
If there were Frenchmen here in 1613, they were here most likely engaged in the fur trade with the natives. There is no evidence that they intended to leave France for the Maine wilderness.
Dr. Wheeler, ignoring the French, believed that “The first permanent settlement of much consequence . . . was made here in 1629 . . . under the direction of the Plymouth colony of Massachusetts.” But this “permanent settlement” was gone by 1635. Indeed, Alaric and Grethchen Faulkner, in their book *The French at Pentagöet* declared that “there was no attempt at wholesale transplantation of European life, to form independent, self sufficient communities” at any point in the early 17th century.

It is impossible to read *The French at Pentagöet* without being impressed with the depth of historical research demonstrated by the Faulkners. They travelled to Paris in order to uncover Fort Pentagöet’s origins. They found the correspondence among the French authorities at the time. They combined these sources with their own archeological expertise and activity to tell the story of the French here in Castine. Their book combines primary sources from France with their own discoveries in the 1980s.

What is a “primary” source? Generally speaking, a primary source dates from the period being written about. It can be an edict, a letter, a diary, a newspaper clipping, a map, or an artifact. Secondary sources, by way of contrast, are produced at a later date, combining and interpreting primary sources to tell a story.

During last summer’s discussions, the “settlement” at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607 was occasionally brought up as an example. How do we know that Jamestown was in fact “settled” in 1607? The answer is easy. We have the primary sources, both in London and Virginia, to support the claim. In fact, one can look at them today by going to the “Historic Jamestowne” website where one can find the names and social status of most of the 104 first settlers. How do we know that the Plymouth colony was “settled” in 1620? Again, the answer is easy. The names of the Mayflower pilgrims are well-known and preserved in the memories of hundreds of thousands of their descendents. If that is not enough, we also have Governor William Bradford’s magnificent *Of Plymouth Plantation*, his record of the colony’s founding and progress, from which we get, among other things, the basis of the Thanksgiving story. In other words, the proof for the settling of Jamestown in 1607 and Plymouth in 1620 may easily be found in primary sources.
in 1765. In the mid-1770s he was active again on surveys in and around Fort Pownal, returning to the Boston area in 1775.

On July 9, 1779, Chadwick sketched the area from Fort Pownal to Cape Rosier and made notations showing the exact location where the British were building a fort and the most likely place to find a good landing (see picture on page 1). He was careful to include features acquainting the rebel forces with what they might find beyond the immediate coast. For example, he drew most of the “Machabigwaduce River” in detail including the four “narros” leading inland. Because of his familiarity with Fort Pownal, he added details of the harbors at Fort Point and Sandy Point in “Frankfourt” (now Stockton Springs) and suggested these were well situated for landing. Known ledges are well marked and the steep shoreline at Cape Rosier and north of Dyce’s Head are clearly indicated. His map key includes the following “references”:

Plot A. said to be the place that is now a Fortifying. Being on an Emanence (over sum uneven Land) descending to the Water.

B. Sum remanes of an Old Fourt built by the French in a former War Called Casteens Fourt.

C. a good landing place from a Smal Harbour Called Sweets Cove, being a sandy beach with sum small stons & an Esey Ascent from the Shor to plot A.

On the westerly Shoor the best landing places are in Cape Jellison Harbour & Above Fort Pownall to wards Sandy point.

Chadwick’s “Sketch of a part of Penobscot” exists still and was recently acquired, along with another unique map of the Penobscot Expedition, for the Castine Historical Society Collections.

The unsigned second map is not titled, with the exception of the word “Plan” on the reverse, or dated (see back page of this issue). This Plan of the Penobscot Expedition depicts the same geographic area shown in the Chadwick sketch, but differs in style and detail. Whereas the “Sketch” is designed to aid navigation and point out features of the shoreline, the undated map is primarily a diagram showing the locations of the troops and ships during the siege while the British were still building the fort and the Americans were preparing to attack in early August 1779. The map was drawn not from the British point of view but from the American. In the detailed “references” or key, the British held sites are labeled “enemy” and the rebel forces are labeled “American.”

Unanswered Questions

The two maps recently acquired were found among personal papers once belonging to Commodore Dudley Saltonstall. In a three page manuscript accompanying the papers, Saltonstall describes the obstacles he faced during the Penobscot Expedition, including his assertion that “the counsel of Massachusets Bay refused upon Application to be at the expense of obtaining the necessary Information of the Nature and Situation of the country.” Yet Chadwick’s “Sketch” appears to have been created specifically to acquaint the commanders with the region. Did Saltonstall not carry the map with him on the journey north in Warren? Could he have received it after the events of July and August 1779? Because Chadwick provided the “Sketch” to John Mastin at Boston, we may be able to learn more by determining Mastin’s role in the preparations for the Expedition.

Both the “Plan” and Chadwick’s “Sketch” have what is now Wadsworth Cove labeled as Sweets Cove in 1779. Yet the British Admiralty chart of the area created in 1776 by Joseph F.W. Des Barres called the spot Matthews Cove and in maps of the War of 1812 period it is again labeled Matthews Cove. Local historian Mark Honey has noted references to both landowners, Matthews and Sweet, in the Hancock County Registry of Deeds. According to historian George Wheeler the area was called Back Cove in the mid-1800s but officially changed to Wadsworth’s Cove in 1876 based on the story of General Peleg Wadsworth crossing the Cove after a daring escape from Fort George in 1780. How long was it called Sweets Cove? Why did both Chadwick and the unknown cartographer of the Plan of the Penobscot Expedition map call it Sweets Cove if British cartographers knew it as Matthews Cove?

The “Plan” or diagram of the siege closely resembles, in fact duplicates in most details, a French
map archived in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. The references are nearly identical in lettering, phrasing and location. The shape of what is now Hatch’s Cove is unusually narrow in both maps. Both maps show four structures, including a windmill, on the Fort Point peninsula in addition to the remains of Fort Pownal. Could one of these maps be a copy of the other? Why is there a French version?

There are differences as well. The French map, unlike the one in Saltonstall’s possession, does not have a name for Sweets Cove. The complete French map includes an inset of the path of the retreating American vessels while the Saltonstall version does not. The French map carries a date (October 6, 1779) but the Saltonstall map is undated. The French map includes two points on what is now the Brooksville shore of the harbor which are not on the Saltonstall version and appear to indicate one place where American vessels put ashore and another where they reconnoitered. We hope that research into the circumstances surrounding the creation of the French map will reveal answers.

Conservation

The maps measure less than 20 x 14 inches each. They were drawn on sturdy paper of high cotton rag content and the ink has not faded. Over the course of more than 200 years, stored folded in a box of letters however, they have received water damage, wear at the creases, and damage from mice or insects. CHS intends to pursue conservation to stabilize the documents so they can be exhibited and studied. High resolution digital copies will be made to minimize exposure to the originals and provide enlargements for long-term exhibit within the permanent Penobscot Expedition exhibit at the Abbott School.


SETTLEMENT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

The non-natives who lived in the area in the 17th century fall into three categories: 1) French and English traders, 2) French clergy, and 3) French military. So far as we have been able to determine, at no time did any of them number more than a few dozen souls. (Dr. Wheeler himself noted that a census of the region in 1689 mentioned only three non-native adults.) Moreover, with one or two possible exceptions, all of the European inhabitants who came and went in the 1600s were males. Not the best way to start a “settlement.”

The primary sources for the settlement of Castine come from the 18th century, not the 17th. That is when, in 1762, the colonial legislature of Massachusetts granted a charter for the settlement of Township Number 3 (then often called Majabigwaduce, later Penobscot, and still later Castine) to a group of citizens, male and female, who wished to come here stay, and raise families.

However, whether one prefers Charles Noyes, George Wheeler, or Alaric and Gretchen Faulkner, the origins of Castine, like many New England communities, will always remain a source of continuous discussion and entertainment.

Editors’ note: For previous discussions of Castine’s signs, see Castine Visitors vol. 19 no. 2 (Summer 2009), vol. 20 no. 1 (Spring 2010) and vol. 22 no. 3 (Fall 2012).

2. George A. Wheeler, History of Penobscot, Castine, and Brooksville, 2d edition, (Cromwell, NY, 1923) 420. There is no record of any correspondence between Noyes and Wheeler. Wheeler also read a paper in 1916 at the same meeting with Noyes, but it has not yet been found.
4. See e.g., Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (1973), 1061
5. Wheeler, 12
7. Thus, the author’s book Missions and Meeting Houses, Chapels and Churches is a secondary source, but using primary sources such as church records, U.S. Censuses, letters, newspapers, etc.
8. William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation (Boston, 1898).
9. Dr. Wheeler often used primary sources, but not in connection with any “settlement” in 1613.
11. The “Petition for Grant of Lands” may be found in the Bangor Historical Magazine, 9:1616-1612.
A “YEAR-ROUND THRIVING COMMUNITY”

The headline above is taken from the “Vision Statement” of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan for Castine, being one of the goals that the Plan was intended to achieve.* Whether the statement describes today’s Castine, or its future, may be a matter of perspective. Your editors were impressed, however, with the degree to which the Castine of yesterday matched the vision of today.

What follows are three selections from the Town’s Annual Report for 1936-1937. We used Reports from the 1930s as primary sources while researching the article on the Castine swimming pool (see Visitor vol. 21 no. 3 Winter 2011).

In 1937, Castine’s population was approximately 700, nearly all of whom were year-round residents. According to the most recent census, our population was 1366, but at least 700 of those were MMA students. Subtracting students from the census figure, the number of residents today is close to what it was three-quarters of a century ago.

But there is a difference. The school enrollment in 1936-1937, including high school, was 125. This would indicate that the average age of the town’s population in 1937 was considerably younger. This made for a vibrant community life so colorfully reported in nine-year-old Ed Coombs’ 1934-1936 Green Street News ** which also featured ads for two grocery stores, two dairy farms, a drug store, barber shop, beauty shop, hardware store, shoe store, print shop, garage with car sales and service and the Folly movie theater (see Visitor vol. 22 no. 3 Fall 2012).

*Full disclosure: One of the editors of this issue served on the Comprehensive Plan Committee.
** Free copies of the reprinted and bound collection of the Green Street News are available at the CHS.
Nonetheless, there were problems. According to the Nursing Report on the previous page, eighty students or sixty-four percent had health problems. The Public Grounds committee took care of the swimming pool but said the town cemetery was being neglected. Emerson Hall needed upkeep and repairs but money was saved on fire insurance by removing rubbish and defective wiring. Suggestions, criticism and advice were encouraged at the annual town meeting. The names of the committee volunteers will be familiar to many readers.

The Town Clerk’s Report for 1936-1937 noted 12 births, 7 marriages and 14 deaths. The oldest death was 91 years, 1 month, 6 days. The youngest was 33 years, 4 months, 21 days. The Clerk collected taxes on 31 dogs.

The Annual Reports of the 1930s show, if not a completely healthy community, at least one that, even in the midst of the Great Depression, came close to being “a year-round, thriving community.”
NEW EDITOR

Wendy Knickerbocker holds a BA in American Studies from Colby College and an MS in Library & Information Science from Simmons College Graduate School. She is the author of *Sunday at the Ballpark: Billy Sunday’s Professional Baseball Career, 1883-1890* (2000) and *Bard of the Bethel: The Life and Times of Boston’s Father Taylor, 1793-1871* (forthcoming).

A retired academic librarian, Ms. Knickerbocker has served colleges in Maine and Rhode Island. She was Director of Library Services at Maine Maritime Academy from 1997-2002, and she has lived year-round in Castine since 1997. She is a Bar Harbor native and has a lifelong interest in the history of Maine’s coastal towns.

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**Holiday Shopping at the Abbott School Gift Shop**

The Castine Historical Society Gift Shop is open by appointment (326-4118 or admin@castinehistoricalsociety.org) on weekdays throughout the fall and winter holiday season. CHS Members receive a 10 percent discount on all Gift Shop purchases. Can’t be in Castine this time of year? We would be pleased to ship your selections to you or a gift recipient (shipping charges will apply, as will 5.5% Maine sales tax only for purchases made at the store or shipped to a Maine address).

Selected items available for shipping (Shipping charges are $6.00 per order under $75 and $10.00 per order $75 and over):

**Missions and Meeting Houses, Chapels and Churches – Four Centuries of Faith in Castine**
book by Lynn Hudson Parsons published by CHS
$19.95

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Ship to: ___________________________________________

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City/State/Zip _____________________________________

To pay by check, mail with this form to CHS, PO Box 238, Castine, ME 04421
(5.5% ME tax) ________________________________

To pay by Visa or MC, call the CHS Administrator at 207-326-4118
Total due $ ________________________________
A Brick in Every Stocking!

This holiday season give a commemorative brick to that special someone!

Join the hundreds of CHS supporters who have remembered their parents, children, friends and even pets by purchasing a personalized brick for the Abbott School walkway. This is the perfect gift for the holidays, a great way to support the Society, and a lasting remembrance for future generations.

Please indicate below how you want the brick to look, using up to 12 letters, numbers and spaces on each of three lines. Also, please provide names and mailing addresses so we can notify recipients of your gift.

Line 1

Line 2

Line 3

Name

Phone (H) ___________________________ (W) ___________________________

Address ______________________________________________________________

The tax deductible price for each brick is $50.00. Please make checks payable to the Castine Historical Society and mail to P.O. Box 238, Castine, ME 04421. To pay by Visa or Mastercard, call the CHS Administrator at 207-326-4118 to make arrangements.

Give a gift of the CHS for the Holidays!

This is the season of thanksgiving and celebration. Perhaps you wish to honor someone with a gift certificate of membership in the Castine Historical Society. If you do please use the form below.

Each new or renewed gift membership conveys all privileges of being a member of the Society, including a subscription to The Castine Visitor, published three times a year.

☐ Individual ............ $25.00  ☐ Sustaining........ $ 60.00  ☐ Patron............... $250.00

☐ Family ................. $40.00  ☐ Contributing ...... $100.00  ☐ Benefactor ........... $500.00

☐ Please renew my membership  ☐ Please send a gift membership to:

Name ______________________________________________________________

Address ______________________________________________________________

Gift Membership Category ____________________________ Check Or Money Order Enclosed ____________________________

Clip and mail to Castine Historical Society, P.O. Box 238, Castine, Maine 04421, or call the CHS Administrator at 207-326-4118 to arrange to pay by credit card (Visa and MC only).
Undated and unsigned Plan of Penobscot Bay showing the location of Fort George as well as the positions of the American and British ships and troops during the siege is referred to in “Mapping the Penobscot Expedition” beginning on page 1.

(CHS Collections)